

The Hittites and the Old Testament

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LONDON
THE TYNDALE PRESS

THE TYNDALE OLD TESTAMENT LECTURE, 1947

The Lecture was delivered at The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire, on December 30th, 1947, at a joint meeting of the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research and the I.V.F. Theological Students' Fellowship.

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THE HITTITES AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

I. THE BIBLICAL DATA SURVEYED

Until last century the Hittites could not have been considered at all, except in relation to the Old Testament, for they were quite unknown outside it. To-day we have learned so much about them from other sources, especially from their own records, that in the light of this wealth of knowledge we can turn back to the Old Testament and read what it has to say about the Hittites with fresh understanding.

The Table of Nations in Gen. x. presents Heth, the eponymous ancestor of the Hittites, as a son of Canaan: "Canaan begat Zidon his firstborn, and Heth" (verse 15; *cf.* 1 Chr. i. 13). Thereafter the Hittites, or children of Heth, regularly appear as one of the medley of races making up the population of Canaan, alongside the Canaanites, Amorites, Hivites, Jebusites, and so on. Abraham, in Gen. xxiii. 3 ff., buys from the sons of Heth a piece of ground at

Hebron as a burying-place for Sarah. Esau, in Gen. xxvi. 34, marries two wives of the daughters of Heth. The report of the spies in Num. xiii. 29 locates the Hittites in the hill country of Canaan, along with the Jebusites and Amorites.

But Joshua i. 4 seems to give them a farther-flung domain: the Israelites are promised the territory “from the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites”. The phrase “the land of the Hittites” appears again in Judges i. 26, where a native of Luz (Bethel), whose life was spared when the Israelites took that city, is said to have gone “into the land of the Hittites” and built another city of Luz there. King David’s empire, according to the restored text of 2 Sam. xxiv. 6, marched on the north with “the land of the Hittites towards Kadesh” (*i.e.* Kadesh on the Orontes); and two Hittites appear in his entourage, although they have Semitic names: Ahimelech the Hittite (1 Sam. xxvi. 6)

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and Uriah the Hittite, one of David’s mighty men and first husband of Solomon’s mother Bath-sheba (2 Sam. xi. 3, *etc.*). Solomon acted as a middleman between Cilicia¹ and Egypt in the horse and chariot trade “for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria” (1 Kings x. 28f.), and Hittite women were included in his well-stocked harem (1 Kings xi. 1). When the Syrian army raised the siege of Samaria in the reign of Jehoram, it was because of a rumour that Jehoram had enlisted against them the aid of “the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians” (2 Kings vii. 6). And last in order of writing, but referring to a point of time at least as early as Abraham’s date, we have Ezekiel’s repeated reminder to the city of Jerusalem that the Amorite was her father, while her mother was a Hittite (Ezek. xvi. 3, 45).

From these references it is clear that the Hittites are presented in the Bible in two ways: first, as one of the ingredients in the population of Canaan, and secondly, as inhabitants of a territory to the north of Palestine whose kings are worthy to be mentioned alongside the kings of Syria and Egypt.

II. THE REDISCOVERY OF THE HITTITES

The first explicit information about the Hittites outside the Biblical narrative was that derived in the nineteenth century from the Egyptian monuments, from which it was learned that the Pharaohs of the New Kingdom who extended their dominion into Syria came into conflict there with a people whose name was represented by the consonants *Kh-t-’*.² In particular, the story of the valour of Rameses II as he led his army against the Hittite king at the Battle of Kadesh on the Orontes (1297 B.C.) was found to be described in graphic language in the Poem of Pentaur, which was engraved on the walls of various temples, and to be portrayed in sculptured relief on the walls of others. The Egyptian text of the treaty which Rameses made with one of that Hittite king’s successors was also discovered, inscribed on the walls of the Temple of Karnak and of the Ramesseum.

Then the Assyrian records, too, were found to make frequent

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references at a later date to several kingdoms of people called the *Khatti*, who lived in various parts of Syria—kingdoms which successively fell before the onslaught of the Assyrian kings in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.

Further light was thrown upon the Hittites by the discovery in 1887 of the Tell el-Amarna tablets, which included a letter to the Egyptian king Akhnaton from the Hittite king Suppiluliumas to congratulate him on his accession to the throne (1377 B.C.).

Various sculptured stones and hieroglyphic inscriptions in Syria and Asia Minor were ascribed to the Hittites by W. Wright, A. H. Sayce, and other scholars,³ because they were found in the territory where the Hittites were known to have lived; but the many attempts to decipher the hieroglyphs have until recently proved unsuccessful.⁴

In the last decade of the nineteenth century fragments of cuneiform tablets were discovered at the village of Bögaz-köy in East-central Asia Minor, written in an unknown language which Pere Scheil, who published them, took to be the language of the Hittites—rightly, as it turned out. In 1906-7 the German archaeologist Hugo Winckler uncovered at Bögaz-köy a record office of the Hittite Empire, containing the royal archives, amounting to some 10,000 clay tablets. For Bögaz-köy (“Village of the Pass”) marks the site of Khattusas, which was for about four centuries (c. 1600-1200 B.C.) the capital city of the Hittite Empire.

There was little difficulty in *reading* these tablets, for their script was cuneiform; but to *understand* them was another matter, for most of the languages—eight in number⁵—represented in the archives were unknown. Two languages represented, however, were known—Sumerian and Akkadian—and the records in these tongues left no doubt as to what the tablets really were; but some years passed before the meaning of the others could be made out. The honour of establishing the character of the chief language of the eight belongs to Professor Bedrich Hrozný, of Prague, who was then on the staff of Vienna University. He found the solution while he was studying the tablets in Istanbul in 1915 for the *Deutsche Orientgesellschaft*.⁶ The English reader will find an account of the discovery in the article “Hittites”

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contributed by Professor Hrozný to the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1929). It was proved that this language—the official language of the Hittite Empire—was Indo-European, that it belonged to the great family of languages which embraces the Indic, Iranian, “Tocharian”, Thraco-Phrygian, Greek, Illyrian, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, Baltic, and Slavonic linguistic groups.⁷ Another interesting fact which emerged was that this Hittite language was identical with a language hitherto called Arzawan, known from two letters in the Tell el-Amarna collection, one of which was a letter from Amenhotep III of Egypt to Tarkhuntaraba, “king of the land of Arzawa” (in Cilicia). As early as 1902 the Norwegian scholar J. Knudtzon, the editor of the Tell el-Amarna tablets, had pronounced the language of the two Arzawa letters to be Indo-European⁸; but such opposition was offered to his view that he withdrew it.

Now that the nature of the principal Hittite language was discovered, a number of scholars of various nations gave their attention to the reading and interpretation of the Bögaz-köy

archives, with the result that the history of the Hittite Empire, previously known in fragmentary fashion from the records of Egypt and Assyria, was now learned at first hand.

III. THE HITTITE EMPIRE

In the third millennium B.C. there lived in Central Asia Minor, in the valley of the River Halys (modern Kizil Irmak) a people called the Khatti, who spoke a language which was neither Indo-European nor Semitic. They came early into contact with the inhabitants of the Euphrates-Tigris valley. Sargon and Naram-sin of Akkad (twenty-fourth century B.C.) are said to have led invading armies well into Asia Minor; and some centuries later Assyrian trading colonies were established in Cappadocia, to the east of the territory of the Khatti. Records of these traders have been uncovered in the Cappadocian tablets, written in Old Assyrian, which were found at Kül-tepe in Asiatic Turkey (the ancient Kanes).⁹ This Assyrian settlement lasted for about three generations (c. 1850-1750 B.C.), during a time

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when the Assyrians were temporarily in control of Upper Mesopotamia.

Shortly afterwards the Assyrian lines of communication with Cappadocia were broken, by the incursion of folk from the north into Upper Mesopotamia. About 2000 B.C. we have ample evidence of a great ethnic movement which sent various peoples from the highland zone north of the Fertile Crescent into the lands within and around the Crescent: soon after that date the Indo-European Hittites appear in Asia Minor, the Hurrians (the Biblical Horites) in Upper Mesopotamia, the Kassites (the Biblical Cush of Gen. x. 8) in Babylonia. How far back the pressure started and what ultimately caused it are matters for speculation; it may have been the result of famine in the steppe-lands of South Russia; but it is important in that it brought the Indo-European speakers for the first time on to the stage of history. Not only do we meet the Indo-Europeans who invaded the territory of the Anatolian Khatti and took over their name; we have the related Luwians farther west; and among the Hurrians and Kassites we have clear evidence of a ruling caste bearing names which are not simply Indo-European but Aryan in the proper sense (*i.e.* Indo-Iranian), although the main mass of the Hurrians and Kassites were linguistically neither Indo-European nor Semitic.¹⁰ The importance of this movement for the history of civilization is very great; it was these northern peoples, to mention but one contribution, who introduced the horse and horse-drawn chariot to the Middle East.¹¹

The Indo-European Hittites seem to have entered Asia Minor from the Caucasus region. The monuments depict them as retaining their snow-shoes even after they came to lower-lying country. Their western neighbours, the Luwians, speaking a kindred tongue, probably came across the Bosphorus and Dardanelles at a somewhat earlier date and mingled with the aboriginal Khatti. The people with whom we are concerned settled among the Khatti and established themselves in city-states. They soon assumed the name Khatti themselves (at least as a territorial designation), but they called their own Indo-European language *nasili* or *nesumnili* ("Nesian")—after Nesas, one of their chief city-states. The language of the original Khatti they

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continued to call *khattili*. Nowadays we conventionally call the language of the Indo-European invaders Hittite, and the language of the older population Proto-Hittite.¹²

The earliest “kings” of some of these Hittite city-states lived before the disappearance of the Assyrian colonies in Cappadocia. They fought against each other, and the ruling house of Kussar proved strongest. Pitkhanas of Kussar captured the city of Nesas (probably one of the four Anatolian cities known to classical writers as Nysa or Nyssa), and his son Anittas enlarged it and made it his capital. Anittas was the first Hittite ruler to assume the title “Great King”.

This dynasty became more powerful still. About 1650 B.C., King Labarnas, having united the Hittites under his sway, and extended his realm to the Black and Mediterranean Seas, carried the Hittite arms beyond the frontiers of Asia Minor into Syria. He enjoys the distinction of having his name used by succeeding kings as a title in the sense of “King” or “Emperor”,¹³ while the name of his wife Tawanannas came to be used as a title meaning “Queen” or “Queen-mother”.

Khattusilis I, the son of Labarnas, continued his father’s military enterprise in Syria, and increased his domains at the expense of the kingdom of Aleppo (Khalpa). Mursilis I,¹⁴ his successor, shifted the imperial capital to Khattusas (“Silver City”), which occupied a strong strategic position east of the Halys. Continuing his predecessors’ campaigns, he captured the city of Aleppo itself, and in a lightning raid down the Euphrates he sacked Babylon and carried away the image of Marduk among the other spoil. This raid so weakened Babylon that it immediately afterwards fell an easy prey to the Kassites, who already dominated the eastern provinces of Babylonia, and established a dynasty which lasted until c. 1150 B.C.¹⁵

But Mursilis had to deal with domestic strife and was unable to consolidate his position in Syria and Mesopotamia. While he and his successors dealt with trouble at home, the Hurrians made themselves the dominant power in those parts, and founded the kingdoms of Khanigalbat and Mitanni in Upper Mesopotamia (c. 1500 B.C.).

Some degree of stability was restored to the Hittite kingdom

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by King Telepinus, whose name is associated with the codification of the Hittite constitution and system of law.¹⁶ The Hittite king was not an absolute monarch; his authority was limited by a council called the *pankus* (like the Greek βουλή), consisting of the feudal nobles. He had the right to nominate his successor, but his nomination must be ratified by the *pankus*. The king was head of the state in matters civil, military, and religious alike. The succession passed normally to his son or son-in-law. The queen (*tawanannas*) retained her authority for life; not until the death of the queen-mother did the king’s wife acquire the title. Her rôle was chiefly a religious one.

In some of these provisions we see traces of a matriarchal system, originating probably not with the Indo-European ruling caste but with some of the native Anatolian elements in the Hittite population. In religious matters the Indo-European Hittites largely took over the worship of the earlier Khatti (“the manner of the gods of the land”); and from the Khatti, too, the matriarchal elements were likely derived.¹⁷

The laws of the Hittites were, generally speaking, humane as compared with those of Babylonia and Assyria; no degrading mutilations were imposed as penalties. Regard for the sanctity of treaties and respect for women are marked features of their system.

The reign of Tudkhalias II (c. 1450 B.C.) marks the beginning of a new period of Hittite imperial expansion. He resumed the old warfare against Aleppo, which had accepted the suzerainty of the kingdom of Mitanni. But the southward advance of the Hittites was blocked not only by the new Hurrian kingdoms but even more by the Egyptian kings of Dynasty XVIII, who, after driving the Hyksos into Asia, extended their empire into Syria. Tudkhalias judged it wise to send an embassy with gifts to Thothmes III who, after his decisive victory at Megiddo in 1468 B.C., had reached Carchemish on the Euphrates in 1462 and taken Kadesh on the Orontes in 1455.

The next two kings continued Tudkhalias's activity in North Syria, but it was his great-grandson Suppiluliumas (1395-1350) who first succeeded in penetrating the barrier which hemmed the Hittites in on the south. It is at this time that the Iron Age

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begins in the Middle East, when a process for the economical smelting of iron was devised in Kizwatna, a province of the Hittite Empire. Suppiluliumas overthrew the Mitanni state and added most of it to his empire, but left the portion beyond the Euphrates as a vassal kingdom to serve as a buffer-state against the rising power of Assyria.

Westwards he carried his arms as far as Lebanon. In the year when the kingdom of Mitanni fell (1370 B.C.) he could boast: "From Lebanon to the Euphrates in less than one year I have added these lands to my dominion."

Between the Hittites and Egyptians the petty kings of Syria found themselves in an embarrassing position. Some who had formerly been vassals of Pharaoh now transferred their loyalty to the Hittite king, especially when the Egyptian grip weakened in the reign of Akhnaton.

In spite of the friendly terms of the letter in which Suppiluliumas congratulated Akhnaton on his accession, relations cannot have been too cordial. The Mitanni dynasty which the Hittite had reduced to vassalage was closely linked to the Egyptian royal house, and the Hittite was too near the Egyptian territory and too powerful to be comfortable. Yet the Hittite and Egyptian crowns might have been united; it is interesting to speculate on what might have been the course of events if this had happened. The widow of an Egyptian king (whether of Akhnaton himself or of his successor Tutankhamon is not certain) wrote to Suppiluliumas expressing a desire to marry one of his sons. A Hittite prince was accordingly sent to Egypt, but met a violent end (we may guess that the new king of Egypt had no wish to welcome a Hittite rival so near the throne). Suppiluliumas declared war on Egypt, and his son Arnuwandas led an army into Egyptian territory in Syria. But the other frontiers of the Hittite Empire were in a state of great unrest, and when Suppiluliumas died in the course of his last campaign, his sons Arnuwandas I and Mursilis II were hard put to it to consolidate their father's conquests. There were hostile tribes in Asia Minor and North Syria, and in the east there was the growing might of Assyria. The Assyrians had once been subject to Mitanni, but with the reduction of that kingdom by Suppiluliumas, the

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Assyrians threw off their yoke and soon established themselves as overlords of the remnant of Mitanni which Suppiluliumas had left; they took it over altogether c. 1250 B.C.

Muwatallis, the son and successor of Mursilis II, made a treaty with the king of the Akhiyawa (identified by many with the Achaeans), whose territory lay in the south-west of Asia Minor.¹⁸ But he is best known as “the wretched king of Khatti” against whom Rameses II fought at the Battle of Kadesh (1297 B.C.). Kadesh on the Orontes, frontier-city of the Hittite Empire, had been captured by Seti I, but was quickly retaken by the Hittites. Rameses II, in the fifth year of his reign, led his army to the attack against the Hittites, but while he claims an overwhelming victory, the sequel makes it plain that the issue was a draw. The battle was followed after sixteen years by a treaty between Rameses and Khattusilis III, the brother of Muwatallis, on an *uti possidetis* basis. In addition to the Egyptian version of the treaty already mentioned, an Akkadian text has been found at Bögaz-köy. It has been called the first non-aggression pact in history. The agreement was further cemented in 1269 B.C. when the daughter of Khattusilis came to Egypt as one of the wives of Rameses.

From this time onwards the Egyptian and Hittite Empires alike grew weaker. The Assyrian menace led Khattusilis to seek an alliance with Babylonia as well as with Egypt. But a greater menace loomed much nearer on the west. The Akhiyawa pressed harder, and there was greater pressure behind them. The downfall of the Minoan Empire about 1400 B.C. and a fresh wave of folk-migrations from the lands north of the Balkan Peninsula led to the filling of the Mediterranean with “the peoples of the sea”, wanderers uprooted from their homes, driven to make a living by piracy and coastal raids, and seeking new lands to settle in. The Egyptian records tell of their attempts on Egypt in the reigns of Merenptah and Rameses III, which were beaten off. But the Hittite land fared otherwise; the Bögaz-köy records come to a sudden end about 1200 B.C., when Khattusas was burned. To this wave of migrations belong the arrival of the Phrygians from Europe in Asia Minor, the wandering of the Etruscans from Asia Minor to Italy, the Philistine settlement in Canaan. The Fall of

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Troy, celebrated in classical epic, was an incident in this great crisis.¹⁹ Homer may even bring the Hittites into his story, if they are the mysterious Κήττειοι whom he mentions in *Odyssey* xi. 521, as was suggested in 1876 by W. E. Gladstone in his *Homeric Synchronisms* (pp. 171-183).

IV. THE HITTITE KINGDOMS OF SYRIA

The great Hittite Empire was at an end, but the Hittite name had not perished from the earth. Both north and south of the Taurus range which divides Asia Minor from Syria the old civilization survived in a number of states which were formerly part of the Hittite Empire. The fortunes of these states are to be traced chiefly in the records of the Assyrian kings, who in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. conquered one by one the Hittite states south of the Taurus. The Assyrians gave the name Hittites (*Khatti*) to the states south of the Taurus only, of which there were seven. In addition to these they enumerated twenty-four north of the Taurus, to which, however, they gave the name “the kingdoms of the land of Tabali”—Tabali being the equivalent of the Biblical Tubal (Gen. x. 2; 1 Chr. i. 5; Ezek. xxvii. 13; xxxviii. 2 f.)

and of the classical writers' Tibareni. But the difference in name was a geographical one; all alike were fragments of the old Hittite Empire and have left hieroglyphic inscriptions in an Indo-European language closely akin to the "Nesian" Hittite of the cuneiform texts and to Luwian.

The Assyrian power, which so increased in the later years of the Hittite Empire, underwent a temporary eclipse after the reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 B.C.), and the Hittite states were therefore able to flourish without interference from that quarter.²⁰ So much did they dominate the area between Lebanon and the Euphrates which Suppiluliumas in earlier days had added to his empire, that the whole area, and even regions farther south, came to be called by the Assyrians "the land of the Khatti". Of these Hittite states Carchemish on the Euphrates was the most powerful. Hamath on the Orontes was another important Hittite kingdom; Toi, king of Hamath, who established

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friendly relations with David (2 Sam. viii. 9; 1 Chr. xviii. 9), was its ruler about 1000 B.C. It was the discovery and study of sculptured stones of this period at Hamath which in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to the beginning of modern Hittitology.

But the revival of Assyrian aggression was the signal of the downfall of these kingdoms. Ashur-naṣir-pal conquered Carchemish in 877 B.C. and exacted a heavy tribute; but it later gained its independence again. His son Shalmaneser III continued the attempt to crush the Hittite kings. In the battle of Karkar by the Orontes in 853 B.C. Irkhuleni king of Hamath appears among Shalmaneser's opponents alongside Ahab of Israel and Ben-hadad (Dadda-idri) of Damascus.

The following century saw the disappearance of all the Hittite states, and their reorganization as Assyrian provinces. The greater part of the kingdom of Hamath was conquered by Tiglath-pileser III in 738, and the remainder fell to Sargon II in 720. Three years later Sargon overthrew the kingdom of Carchemish, the last Hittite state of any importance; and such small pockets of Hittite independence as survived were mopped up in the later years of Sargon's reign. When his successor Sennacherib sent his intimidating letter to Hezekiah of Judah and referred him to the example of other kings conquered by the Assyrians, he included Hittite rulers in the list (2 Kings xix. 13; Isa. xxxvii. 13): "Where is the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad?"

V. THE BIBLICAL DATA EXAMINED

When we find Biblical references to the Hittite occupation of a considerable extent of territory north of Canaan, as in the passage already quoted from Josh. i. 4, we have a usage very similar to the Assyrian one. "From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites" would cover very well the territory which the Assyrians designated the land of the Khatti. The day has long since gone by when a scholar should express surprise at the

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mention of “the kings of the Hittites” in 2 Kings vii. 6 rather than of “the king of Judah, the real and near ally”.²¹ But it is obvious now that if Jehoram had indeed enlisted the aid of the Hittite kings, as the panic-stricken Syrians imagined, they might well flee. In point of fact, the Hittite states were at that time allied with the Damascene kingdom by reason of the Assyrian threat to both alike, so that the securing of their aid by Jehoram against Ben-hadad was highly unlikely; but men in a panic will believe anything.

But what of the Hittites who are enumerated as one of the peoples of Canaan? They appear in four parts of the land: (1) at Hebron, where they form the dominant population, the *am ha| -āreṣ*, in the time of Abraham, who is a resident alien among them (Gen. xxiii); (2) at Beersheba or thereabout in the time of Isaac, whose son Esau marries daughters of Heth (Gen. xxvi. 34); (3) possibly at Bethel, if this is a proper inference from the fact that the quisling Bethelite made his way to “the land of the Hittites” (Judg. i. 26); (4) at Jerusalem, to which Ezekiel, as we have seen, ascribes a mixed Hittite and Amorite foundation.

To these indications we may add the statement in Num. xiii. 29 that the Hittites were one of the peoples occupying the central mountain-ridge of Canaan. And we may note the interesting fact that as late as 711 B.C. an inscription of Sargon II records a revolt against the Assyrians by the Khatti of Ashdod (for the occasion *cf.* Isa. xx. 1).

One thing is certain: at no time known to us did the Hittite Empire itself extend into Canaan, much less as far south as Judah. The Canaanite Hittites are not so called because they belonged either to that empire or to the Hittite states which succeeded it.

The use of the word Khatti with reference to the population of Ashdod may simply be the result of the loose Assyrian fashion of denoting Syria in general as “the land of the Khatti”, though this is not the only possible explanation. But the Biblical references to the Hittites as one among several peoples of Canaan can hardly be set down as imitation of Assyrian usage.

The narrative of Abraham’s purchase of the cave of Machpelah in Gen. xxiii is by the Wellhausenist analysis ascribed to the

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post-exilic Priestly Code, though the ascription has been questioned. We do not discuss this matter here, but it is to be emphasized that, whatever date be given to the narrative in its final form, its essential antiquity and accuracy must be acknowledged. “The story,” says S. H. Hooke, “has every appearance of being an ancient tradition. The details of the sale conform accurately to the technical style of the numerous Babylonian and Assyrian contract tablets which have been discovered in the course of excavating many Mesopotamian city sites. The purchase price is weighed, as was customary at a time when coinage had not yet made its appearance.”²²

Professor Hooke goes on to say, however: “The principal historical difficulty is the mention of Hittites as occupying Hebron in the time of Abraham.”²³ He suggests that we have here an anachronism, the writer having projected into the past the conditions of a later time. Now, there is nothing to be surprised at in this suggestion; a writer of the present day might similarly say that the Scots opposed Agricola’s advance in North Britain in A.D. 84,

overlooking for the moment the fact that there were no Scots in those parts until the fifth century.

Emil Forrer added another argument in two articles on “The Hittites in Palestine” which appeared in the Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement for 1936 and 1937. He connected the presence of Hittites in Palestine with a passage in an inscription of Mursilis II in 1331 B.C. which implies that about twenty years previously certain rebel subjects of the Hittite king escaped as fugitives to Egyptian territory and were allowed by the Egyptians to settle in part of the Egyptian Empire—according to Forrer, in the sparsely populated hill-country of Judah.

However this might be, if these were the first Hittites in Palestine, the placing of them there in Abraham’s day remains an anachronism. But there is more to say.

A further suggestion is that “Hittites” is a general term by which the Old Testament writers denoted the non-Semitic populations of Canaan, and that the Canaanite Hittites are really the people whom we now call Hurrians.²⁴ The Hurrians who, as we have seen, entered Upper Mesopotamia from the north about the same time as the Indo-European Hittites came

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into Asia Minor, spread farther westward, and so many of them entered Canaan that one of the Egyptian words for Canaan was *Khûru* (Hurrian-land). That there were Hurrians in Canaan in Abraham’s time is certain. And if we could take Ezekiel’s account of the origin of Jerusalem to mean that it was a joint Amorite and *Hurrian* foundation, we should immediately have an illuminating commentary on the name of Puti-khepa, governor of the city in the Amarna Age, whose name means “Servant of the (Hurrian) goddess Khepa”,²⁵ But on the other hand we must remember the possibility, to put it no higher, that another native of Canaanite Jerusalem, Araunah the Jebusite (perhaps the Jebusite king who accepted David’s over lordship),²⁶ has a name which can plausibly be identified with Hittite *arawanis* (“freeman”, “noble”)—the only Old Testament character for whose name a Hittite etymology can be offered that is anything like convincing.²⁷

It is no doubt owing to the presence in Canaan of the Hurrians, whose ruling stock was of Aryan linguistic origin, that we find Aryan names in Canaan round about this time, similar to those which appear in the list of kings of Mitanni and of the Kassite kings of Babylonia.²⁸ The theory which finds in these Hurrians the solution of the problem of the Canaanite Hittites is very attractive; and some place must in any case be allowed to the possibility of confusion in the record between Hittites and Hurrians. The Hivites of the Old Testament were either Hurrians pure and simple, or else a particular branch of the Hurrians.²⁹ Now, in Gen. xxvi. 34, Elon, one of Esau’s fathers-in-law, who is called a Hittite in the Massoretic Hebrew, appears as a Hivite in the LXX and Samaritan texts. Contrariwise, “the Hivite under Hermon” in Josh. xi. 3 appears in the LXX as “the Hittites” (τὸς Χετταίους).

But despite some confusion of the two peoples in the textual tradition, the Hittites and the Hivites are regularly differentiated in the list of the peoples of Canaan (Ex. iii. 8 and some sixteen other places).

The fact is, that when the Hurrians came into Palestine, they were not unaccompanied by other northerners. The migration of both Hurrians and Hittites into Canaan was part of a wide

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movement, and is to be connected with the southward advance of the Hyksos, the “rulers of foreign lands”, as the Egyptians called them. These Hyksos and their followers, before invading Egypt about 1720 B.C., established their supremacy in Canaan— a supremacy which has left archaeological traces in the distinctive enclosure with rampart-fortifications of *terre pisée* which the Hebrews called *ḥăṣērīm* (Deut. ii. 23).³⁰

The Hyksos princes were mostly of Semitic origin, if we may judge by their names (*e.g.*, their leader in the invasion of Egypt bore, according to Manetho, the name Salatis, a Semitic word meaning “ruler”, cognate with Sultan). Yet some of them, like Khian, had decidedly non-Semitic names.³¹ And their followers were a mixed multitude, including Hittites (probably both Proto-Hittites and Indo-European Hittites), Luwians, Hurrians, and Aryans, as well as Semites;³² and in this mixed multitude the roving bands known as Khabiru were no doubt also represented.

Abraham’s date may be inferred by comparing Gen. xiii. 18 and xxiii. 2 ff. with Num. xiii. 22. According to the last passage, “Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt”; and according to the Genesis passages, Hebron existed in Abraham’s time. The foundation of Zoan (*i.e.* Tanis or Avaris) referred to in Num. xiii. 22 is doubtless its foundation by the Hyksos about 1720 B.C.³³ A date towards the end of the eighteenth century B.C. for Abraham’s arrival in Canaan is therefore indicated, and in view of what has just been said, the presence of Hittites in South Canaan at that time cannot be called an anachronism.

VI. “TIDAL KING OF NATIONS” A HITTITE KING?

Something more remains to be said about Abraham’s relation with the Hittites. The fourteenth chapter of Genesis is a document of great historical importance, although its exact setting in what we know of the history of those times is still difficult to fix. In the days when “Amraphel king of Shinar” was confidently identified with the Babylonian king Khammurabi (an identification first made by Eberhard Schrader in 1887), it did seem that

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the exact historical context of the chapter was determinable. “Arioch ³⁴ king of Ellasar” might then be Rim-sin of Larsa, whose name, it was said, might possibly be read Eri-aku; and as for “Chedorlaomer³⁵ king of Elam”, whose name is undoubtedly Elamite (Kutur-Lakamal, “Servant of the goddess Lakamal”), he might be Kutur-Mabuk, king of Elam and father of Rim-sin, although others have identified him with Kutur-Nakhunte (c.1625-1610), another Elamite ruler.

But the identification of Amraphel with Khammurabi of Babylon or any of the other Khammurabis³⁶ who were more or less contemporary has been generally abandoned. The West Semitic (Amorite) form of the name was not Amraphel but Khammurapikh.³⁷ Amraphel probably contains the name Amurru, the divine eponym of the Amorites; it may be Amurru-apili (“Amurru is my champion”).³⁸ And the Shinar of which he was king is nowadays thought to be Singar in Upper Mesopotamia,³⁹ stretching from the vicinity of

Nineveh to the confluence of the Euphrates and Khabur, rather than the land of Sumer and Akkad.⁴⁰

But what has all this to do with the Hittites?

One of the three kings who accompanied Chedorlaomer on his march was “Tidal king of nations” (*Tidha |l melekḥ go |yīm*). Now this name is the most easily identifiable of the four. It corresponds (with the dropping of the Hittite inflection) to Tudkhalias, the name of five Hittite kings. Was Tidal one of these? Of course there may have been other kings called Tudkhalias, though we do not happen to know of any; the name is also found in the Cappadocian tablets as that of a private citizen of Anatolia. That any of the Hittite kings might appropriately have received the title “king of nations” is plain.

The last three Hittite kings called Tudkhalias are out of the question here. Tudkhalias III played no significant part in history and his date (1400 B.C.) is too late; no such military enterprise as that described in Gen. xiv took place in the reign of Amenhotep III. We might similarly say that the date of Tudkhalias II (c. 1450 B.C.) is also too late, and that no such enterprise as that of Gen. xiv took place after the Egyptian kings of Dynasty XVIII began their career of conquest in

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Palestine and Syria. But Franz Böhl ably maintained that Tudkhalias II was in fact the Tidal of Gen. xiv and that Abraham must be dated in the time of the Kassites and of the Egyptian Dynasty XVIII (*Das Zeitalter Abrahams* [Leipzig, 1930]). In order to do so, however, he had to place the date of Tudkhalias II much earlier in Dynasty XVIII than is warranted.

This Tudkhalias begins a new Hittite dynasty, and he ranks as founder of the “new” Hittite Empire, which lasted from his time till its downfall about 1200. At the beginning of this new period of Hittite history the Hittite kings again crossed the Taurus range and collided with the recently founded kingdom of Mitanni. If Böhl’s theory were right, we should expect to find Mitanni playing a leading part in the narrative of Gen. xiv; but there is no word of it. Elam we know; Shinar we have had identified with Singār; Ellasar, once popularly identified with Larsa, may (as Böhl suggested) be Til-ashurri on the Upper Euphrates (cf. 2 Kings xix. 12; Isa. xxxvii. 12). But of the Mitanni kingdom, founded a short time before the reign of Tudkhalias II, there is no word.

What about the chronology? Böhl would date Abraham early in Dynasty XVIII (say between 1550 and 1500), and he regarded the entry into Canaan of Jacob and his family on their return from Paddan-Aram as the Biblical counterpart of the Khabiru invasions which were going on when the Tell el-Amarna correspondence was being written. This, of course, involves dating the Exodus under Merenptah (1234-1224). Böhl’s general chronological position is not unlike that maintained by Professor Rowley in *Israel’s Sojourn in Egypt* (Manchester, 1938).⁴¹ They both rightly remind us that we must not neglect the genealogical statements of the Old Testament in calculating its chronology.

The Merenptah dating of the Exodus, however, is too late, as the famous stele of that Pharaoh, belonging to his fifth year, represents the Israelites as having by that time penetrated to Western Canaan. Professor Albright’s suggestion of a date about 1290 is not only attractive in

itself, but is powerfully supported by his brilliant interpretation of the 430 years of Exod. xii. 40 as a calculation from the Era of Tanis (*i.e.* from the Hyksos foundation of that city about 1720).⁴² Let us remember, too,

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that the LXX and Samaritan texts take the 430 years as covering the sojourning of the Israelites (or rather their ancestors) in Canaan as well as their stay in Egypt; that is, as Paul in Gal. iii. 17 infers from this verse, 430 years separated Abraham from the Exodus. So we are brought again to a date about 1720 for the events of Gen. xiv.

In looking for a period in which such a military operation as that of Chedorlaomer and his allies could have been carried out, Böhl decides for the period of confusion immediately following the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt. The breakdown of the Hyksos Empire would certainly offer an invitation to surrounding nations to come and take their share of the spoils. But in point of fact the Pharaohs of Dynasty XVIII lost no time in following the fleeing Hyksos into Asia. Amenhotep I, second king of the Dynasty (1546-1525), conquered Canaan, and Thothmes I, his successor, set up a stele by the Euphrates. There does not really seem to be room or time here for Chedorlaomer's enterprise.

But if we give up the idea of the aftermath of the Hyksos downfall as a setting for Gen. xiv, we may consider the period preceding the establishment of their domination. And Tudkhalias I is naturally thought of at this time. Böhl, rather contemptuously, says that anyone who really wants to bring him in can do so, as in that case fancy has free play. But there are reasonable grounds for considering him. Tudkhalias I was the great-great-grandfather of Mursilis I, who sacked Babylon at the end of the First Babylonian Dynasty, in the former half of the sixteenth century B.C. Tudkhalias may therefore be dated somewhere in the second half of the eighteenth century B.C. Among those who identify this Tudkhalias with Tidal is F. W. König (*Geschichte Elams* [Leipzig, 1931], pp. 27 f.), who remarks: "The rise of Elamite power stands in the closest relation to the Semitic wave which established the 'First' Dynasty of Babylon. ... To this movement also belongs the rise of the Hittites from Tudkhalias I onward, who will in that case be identical with the Tidal of Genesis xiv." ⁴³

At present, however, all that we can safely say is that the name and date of Tudkhalias I of the Hittites coincide closely with those of Tidal king of nations; but we do not know enough about this Tudkhalias to identify them outright. But if further discoveries

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should enable us to do so, and should confirm that the raid of the Elamite king and his allies was an incident in the confused times preceding the rise of the Hyksos Empire, we should have further light on the presence of Hittites in Canaan in Abraham's time.

And here we have to leave the matter. Further discovery may confirm our suggestion, or it may confute it. But as we remember how the history of the Hittites was rediscovered, and how the place which for long ages was given to them by the Bible alone was thus so largely vindicated, we may feel that a hypothesis which maintains agreement with further Biblical statements about this interesting people is at least more likely to be right than one which involves the rejection of these statements.

NOTES

¹ In I Kings x. 28 read with LXX and Vulg. *miq-Qo|wah* ("from Kué [Cilicia]") twice instead of MT *miqwe|h* ("drove"). So, too, in 2 Sam. xxiv. 6, referred to above, read with LXX *ereş ha-Ḥittî|m Qa|dhe|sha|h* for MT *ereş Taḥtūm-ḥodhshî*.

² In this paper the guttural spirant in Egyptian, Akkadian, and Hittite words is, for general convenience, transliterated *kh*.

³ See accounts by Wright, *The Empire of the Hittites* (1884); Sayce, *The Hittites* (1888; 4th ed. 1925); A. E. Cowley, *The Hittites* (1920); D. G. Hogarth, *Kings of the Hittites* (1926).

⁴ The leading worker on Hittite hieroglyphs is Professor Ignace J. Gelb of Chicago University; see his *Hittite Hieroglyphs* i-iii (1932-35-42); *Hittite Hieroglyphic Monuments* (1939).

⁵ These eight languages are Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Proto-Hittite, Luwian, Palaic, Hurrian and Aryan.

⁶ He announced his discovery in "Die Lösung des hethitischen Problems" in *Mitteilungen der deutschen Orientgesellschaft*, No. 56 (1915), and in *Die Sprache der Hethiter* (1916-17).

⁷ On the Hittite language see E. H. Sturtevant, *Comparative Grammar of the Hittite Language* (1933), *Hittite Glossary* (2nd ed., 1936), and *Supplement to Hittite Glossary* (1937), and E. H. Sturtevant and G. Bechtel, *Hittite Chrestomathy* (1935). Sturtevant holds that Hittite is not in the ordinary sense an Indo-European language, but that Hittite and Proto-Indo-European are both descended from a common parent stock which he calls "Indo-Hittite"; this view is accepted by several scholars, but is quite unnecessary. Hittite was radically affected by the influence of other languages. Its Indo-European character is evident from its morphology rather than its vocabulary. Many words from native Anatolian languages have found their way into it. If its phonology and morphology are simpler than those of other early Indo-European languages, this is not because it was a language in the making, but one whose synthetic structure had already begun to break down, under the impact of other languages (*cf.* Old English under the impact of Norman French, Bulgarian under the impact of invaders speaking a Turco-Tataric language, Persian under the impact of Arabic).

⁸ J. Knudtzon, *Die zwei Arzawabriefe: die ältesten Urkunden in indogermanischer Sprache* (1902).

⁹ It was not, however, from these Assyrian-merchants that the Hittites appear to have taken over the cuneiform script, but through the Hurrians as intermediaries. See E. A. Speiser, *Introduction to Hurrian* (1941), pp. 13 f.

¹⁰ In a treaty between the Hittite king Suppiluliumas and the Mitanni king Mattiwaza, among the gods of Mitanni invoked are Mitrashil, Arunashil, Intara, and Nashatiana; these are obviously the same as the Indian deities Mitra, Varuna, Indra, and the Nasatya twins. Among the Mitanni kings we have such typically Aryan names as Artatama, Artashuwara; among the Kassite kings, Burnaburyash, Nazi-bugash, Nazi-maruttash.

¹¹ Among the Boğaz-köy records is a treatise on the care of horses and chariot-racing, written by a man named Kikkuli, who belonged originally to Mitanni. Although composed in Hittite, it contains the following Aryan technical terms: *aikawartanna*, *terawartanna*, *panzawartanna*, *shattawartanna*, and *nawartanna* (by haplology for *nawa-wartanna*), meaning "one turning", "three turnings", "five turnings", "seven turnings", and "nine turnings" respectively. The numerals correspond to Sanskrit *eka*, *tri*, *pañca*, *sapta*, and *nava* (but that for "seven" has already reached the Prakrit stage with the assimilation of *p* to *t*); the second element in the compounds corresponds to Sanskrit *vartana*, "turning." In Syria at this time we find an equestrian warrior-caste called *marianu*, with which we may compare Sanskrit

marya, "young man." Hebrew *sūs*, "horse," is very likely an Aryan loanword; *cf.* Sanskrit *açva(s)*. It should be noted that Sayce's theory that Hebrew *pa|ra|sh*, "horse," is a word of Hittite origin is quite erroneous; see O. R. Gurney, in *PEFQ.* 1937, pp. 194f. E. A. Speiser suggests that one of the Egyptian words for "chariot" may be of Hurrian origin (*Ethnic Movements in the Near East* [1933], pp. 49 f.).

¹² Proto-Hittite has been connected with the North-West Caucasian language-group (R. Bleichsteiner in Ebert's *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte* vi [1926], pp. 260-63). Such connections are in the nature of the case precarious. Among ancient tongues Proto-Hittite shows contacts with Hurrian, Elamite, and Kassite; *i.e.*, it belongs to the

language-group to which the late N. Marr and his school give the name “Japhetic”. It was a prefixing language; e.g., *binu*, “child,” has a plural *lebinu*, “children.”

¹³ The title appears as *Tabarnas*. Actually the word is Proto-Hittite, having as its initial sound an unvoiced *l* which is represented now as *l*, now as *t*, and sometimes as *tl*. The same sound appears in Elamite. Compare the Aztec unvoiced *l* which the Spaniards represented in writing as *tl*, as in *Quetzalcoatl*, *Popocatapetl*. The unvoiced Welsh *ll*, which some English speakers try to represent by *lth* or *thl*, is a similar sound.

¹⁴ The name Mursilis survived for long in Asia Minor. According to Herodotus (i. 7) Myrsilos was the name by which the Lydian king Kandaules was known to the Greeks; he implies that it was a patronymic, Kandaules being the son of Myrsos. Cf. Myrsilos, tyrant of Mytilene in the seventh century B.C., whose death is celebrated by Alcæus (fragment 39): —

νῦν χρῆ μεθύσθην καὶ τινα πρὸς βίαν
πώνην, ἐπειδὴ κάτθανε Μύρσιλος

¹⁵ The end of the First (Amorite) Dynasty of Babylon, which was precipitated by this raid, is given by Sidney Smith as 1595 B.C., by W. F. Albright as 1550.

¹⁶ The idea that Telepinus extended his influence as far south as Damascus has been based on a doubtful identification of the Damaskhunas of the Hittite records.

¹⁷ The matriarchate in Asia Minor is of course closely connected with the worship of the Great Mother of the Gods in that area.

¹⁸ See F. Sommer, *Die Ahhijavā-Urkunden* (1932).

¹⁹ The date of the Trojan War was, according to Eratosthenes, 1193-1184 B.C.; according to the Parian Marble, 1218-1209 B.C. This traditional dating accords remarkably closely with archaeological evidence.

²⁰ Some people called Khatti raided Babylon and occupied it for a few days in the time of Nebuchadrezzar I (c. 1130 B.C.).

²¹ Quoted by Sayce, *The Hittites* (4th ed., 1925), p. 11.

²² *In the Beginning*, Clarendon Bible vi. (1947), pp. 92 f.

²³ *Op. cit.*, p. 93.

²⁴ E. A. Speiser, *Mesopotamian Origins* (1930), pp. 134f.; J. Paterson, in *Studia Semitica et Orientalia* ii. (Glasgow, 1945), p. 101.

²⁵ The Semitic names given to early rulers of Jerusalem, Melchizedek (Gen. xiv. 18), and Adonizedek (Josh. x. 1), would derive from the Amorite element in the city's population.

²⁶ His name is variously given as Awarnah, Arawnah, and Aranyah in 2 Sam. xxiv. 16 ff., and is glossed *ham-melek*h, “the king,” in ver. 23.

²⁷ Sayce attempted to find a Hittite etymology for Ephron in Gen. xxiii. (*JTS.* xxix. [1928], p. 405) and suggested that it was equivalent to Hittite *hipparas*, which he rendered “freeholder”. “Ephron, ‘the Freeholder,’ was thus absolute master of the property which he sold to Abraham.” (But Sturtevant's *Hittite Glossary*, p. 50, gives *hipparas* the meaning “captive”!) Ephron's father Zohar, Sayce thought, bore a name equivalent to *zūkharu* of the Assyro-Cappadocian tablets, a word denoting the “boy” or “agent” of the Assyrian merchants. This may be ignored, but his further remark is noteworthy, that the Biblical writer in Gen. xxiii.

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16 f. repeats the technical language of the contract tables found at Kül-tepe and Kirkuk.

²⁸ In Syria and Palestine we find such Aryan names as Shuwardata, Artamanya, Shubandu, Piridashwa, Indaruta.

²⁹ “Possible is also the assumption of a Horite subdivision known as the Hiwmites, whose name supplanted the more general designation [Horites] on account of complications arising through popular etymology” (E. A. Speiser, *Ethnic Movements* [1933], p. 30).

³⁰ E. A. Speiser concludes that “the Avvim who dwelt in enclosures (*ḥāṣe | rim*)” (Deut. ii. 23) “represented a Hyksos group” (*Ethnic Movements*, p. 31).

³¹ Speiser, *Ethnic Movements*, p. 48.

³² Speiser, *Ethnic Movements*, pp. 34, 51; T. J. Meek, *Hebrew Origins* (1936), p. 5; J. Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past* (1946), p. 125.

³³ W. F. Albright discussed the date of Abraham in the *Journal of the Society of Oriental Research* x. (1926), pp. 231-69. An earlier date might be suggested if we accept the attractive identification of the campaign of Gen. xiv with the destruction of the Bronze Age civilization of Transjordan dated by Nelson Glueck around 1900 B.C.; but an accommodation between the two datings may yet be reached.

³⁴ F. M. Th. Böhl (*Das Zeitalter Abrahams* [1930], p. 23) thinks that Arioch may be an Indo-European name *Āryaka* ("worthy of an Aryan" or "honourable"); but Speiser, with greater probability, connects it with the Hurrian name *Ariukki* (*Ethnic Movements*, p. 45). (More recently Böhl has suggested an identification of Arioch with *Ar-ri-wu-uk* in the Mari letters; see *Bibliotheca Orientalis* ii, p. 66.)

³⁵ Böhl (*op. cit.*, p. 13) draws attention to the tendentious Massoretic vocalization of some of these names: Laomer being vocalized as *lab-bo|sheth* ("for shame"); Amraphel as *'āra|phel* ("darkness"), whereas LXX gives his name as Amarphal.

³⁶ Khammurabi of Yamkhad and Khammurabi of Kurda. Cf. Sidney Smith, *Alalakh and Chronology* (1940), p. 10.

³⁷ Sidney Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

³⁸ So Böhl, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Cf. Speiser, *Ethnic Movements*, p. 45. It appears that Albright was the first to express the view that the name contains the element Amurru, a view which, says Speiser, "is unquestionably sound."

³⁹ Albright in *JSOR*. x. (1926), p. 256; Böhl, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁴⁰ Elsewhere (e.g. Gen. x. 10; xi. 2) Shinar (שִׁנְאָר) may well represent Sumer, which goes back to an earlier Sumerian form Kiengi(r).

⁴¹ Professor Rowley places the Descent into Egypt around 1365 B.C., which would agree well enough with Böhl's date for Abraham.

⁴² *BASOR*. 58 (1935), p. 16; *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (1940), p. 184.

⁴³ The identification of Tidal with Tudkhalias I is favoured by Sayce (*The Hittites*, 4th ed., p. 228) and by Professor Hooke (*In the Beginning*, pp. 73 f.).

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LIST OF HITTITE KINGS TO 1200 B.C.

THE OLD EMPIRE

Pitkhanas, king of Kussar	c. 1800
Anittas, son of Pitkhanas	c. 1770
Tudkhalias I, son of Anittas	c. 1740
Pusarmas, son of Tudkhalias I	c. 1710
Pawakhtelmakh, brother of Pusarmas	c. 1680
Labarnas, son of Pusarmas	c. 1660
Khattusilis I, son of Labarnas	c. 1630
Mursilis I, son of Khattusilis I	c. 1600
Khantilis, brother-in-law of Mursilis I	c. 1566
Pisenis, son of Khantilis	c. 1550
Zidantas, usurper	c. 1530
Ammunas, son of Zidantas	c. 1520
Khuzzias	c. 1500
Telepinus, brother-in-law of Khuzzias	c. 1480

THE NEW EMPIRE

Tudkhalias II	c. 1450
Khattusilis II, son of Tudkhalias II	c. 1430
Tudkhalias III, son of Khattusilis II	c. 1405
Suppiluliumas, son of Tudkhalias III	c. 1395-1350
Arnuwandas I, son of Suppiluliumas	c. 1350
Mursilis II, brother of Arnuwandas I	c. 1350-1322
Muwatallis, son of Mursilis II	c. 1322-1295
Urghi-Teshup, son of Muwatallis	c. 1295-1290
Khattusilis III, brother of Muwatallis	c. 1290-1260
Tudkhalias IV, son of Khattusilis III	c. 1260-1230
Arnuwandas II, son of Tudkhalias IV	c. 1230-1215
Tudkhalias V, son of Arnuwandas II	c. 1215-1200

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*It is with grateful thoughts that I record the name of Dr. Robert Bleichsteiner under whom I made my first acquaintance with Hittitology and related subjects in the University of Vienna, 1934-35.

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Prepared for the web by Michael Farmery and Robert I Bradshaw in April 2005.

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